



# NEWS

## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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**Governor Walker calls on state ag and transportation agencies to continue issuance of Ag Emergency Permits to assist farmers impacted by drought**

*Free permits allow transport of heavier loads of hay bales following last summer's drought that has resulted in record low hay stockpiles on Wisconsin farms*

Governor Scott Walker has directed the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to continue issuance of free Agricultural Emergency Permits allowing the transport of heavier loads of hay bales along state and local roadways.

Last year's prolonged drought caused wide-spread hay crop failures, resulting in record low, on-farm hay stock levels in Wisconsin. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wisconsin dry hay stocks totaled 410,000 tons as of May 1, 2013 – a 56 percent decrease from a year ago.

"Last summer's drought and hay shortages continue to cause serious economic hardships for many Wisconsin farm families," said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. "With record low hay stockpiles in Wisconsin, this will help get hay to areas where it's urgently needed."

Last year's Executive Order allowing issuance of Ag Emergency Permits was set to expire June 30, 2013. Governor Walker has asked WisDOT to continue issuing the emergency permits through June 30 of 2014.

"As government agencies and officials, we're working cooperatively to do all we can in support of our agricultural economy," said WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb.

Continuing through June 30, 2014, WisDOT's Division of Motor Vehicles Motor Carrier Services Section will issue free permits authorizing the transport of hay bales during daylight hours along all roadways of the state under the following conditions:

- At a maximum overall height of 14-feet 6-inches, width of 12-feet, and length of 75-feet for combination vehicles and 45-feet for single vehicles;
- At a maximum gross weight not to exceed 90,000 pounds on vehicle combination with a minimum of five axles (less weight is allowed if the vehicle is not in combination or has four or fewer axles);
- Vehicles must be registered for a minimum of 50,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, or be exempt from registration as an "Implement of Husbandry" as defined in state law.

All permit conditions impacting size, weight, flagging, signing, and hours of operation must be complied with, along with all other laws pertaining to load securement, driver hours of service, vehicle registration and taxation. The permits allow transport of heavier loads of hay bales Monday through Sunday, except for: Friday through Monday of the Memorial Day and Labor Day holidays, and from noon July 3<sup>rd</sup> until sunrise July 8<sup>th</sup>. The permit must be carried in the permitted vehicle and be made available to law enforcement upon request. Those interested in applying for a permit should contact WisDOT's Oversize/Overweight Permits Unit at (608) 266-7320.

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NOTE: This document can be viewed on the Internet at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news>